

Demonstrating Good Teaching

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David G. Brown

Often candidates for tenure and promotion, as well as course designers, complain that too little credit is given for their use of technology in teaching. Usually, they're wrong. Most disciplines at most colleges seek out and honor the capacity to use technology in teaching and research. The problem is not undervaluing the use of technology or not undervaluing the importance of good teaching. The problem is measuring effective teaching.



Scholarly research seems to be more valued only because it's more easily measured: by grants received, refereed articles published, citations to one's writing by respected authors, and the critical reading of scholarly writing by tenure and promotion committees.

The irony is that departmental colleagues, deans, trustees, legislators, and students want to reward effective teaching at least as much as quality research. The challenge is differentiating exceptional from ordinary teaching, separating good teaching from the mediocre.

Evaluators need help. Professors being evaluated can help themselves as well as the evaluators by taking advantage of available technology to measure and make visible good teaching? Here are 10 ideas that can help:

1. Encourage departmental colleagues to view and analyze the activity on your course Web site.
2. Require students to complete some final exam sessions questions by constructing a Web page or a PowerPoint presentation.
3. Cite numbers demonstrating collaboration (e.g. entries in a chat room discussion), Peer-to-Peer and Peer-to-Professor e-mails.
4. List the ways, both face-to-face and electronically, in which students

interact with each other and with the professor.

5. Name the individuals (and their positions) with whom students interact (for example, practitioners in the field).
6. Ask students, about every three weeks, to e-mail you comments about how the course is going, its strengths and weaknesses, and how it can be improved.
7. Invite colleagues to visit your class.
8. Seek and archive student comments on the effectiveness of the course for a particular session.
9. Seek and archive comments from practitioners and professorial colleagues who collaborate with you for a particular course.
10. Maintain an electronic "teaching portfolio" for the purpose of self-evaluation and for sharing with P&T committees as well as prospective employers.

Please share your ways of making effective teaching more visible so they can be added to this list!

The primary value of using technology in teaching is increased communication—communication of course content, communication for the sake of improving the course, and communication for demonstrating its effectiveness. We are already rich in data to demonstrate effective teaching. By using it we can implement our desire to reward good teaching.

Generating and using such data brings one more immense benefit. By studying the data ourselves, we can learn what's working and not working. This feedback can be used to improve our course and teaching effectiveness. Using technology in the evaluation and marketing of good teaching makes good sense. As the measurement of teaching improves, we can expect that both the quality of teaching and the rewards for teaching will increase.

David Brown (brown@wfu.edu) is vice president and dean of the International Center for Computer Enhanced Learning at Wake Forest University.

brown@wfu.edu

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